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WINTER REVERIES

and Other Bits of Verse

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By
W. A. Zimmerman

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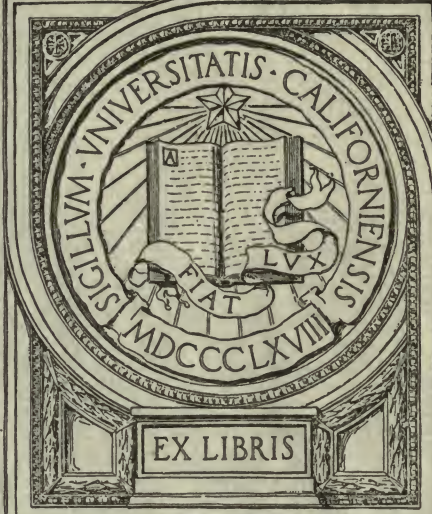
William A. Zimmerman



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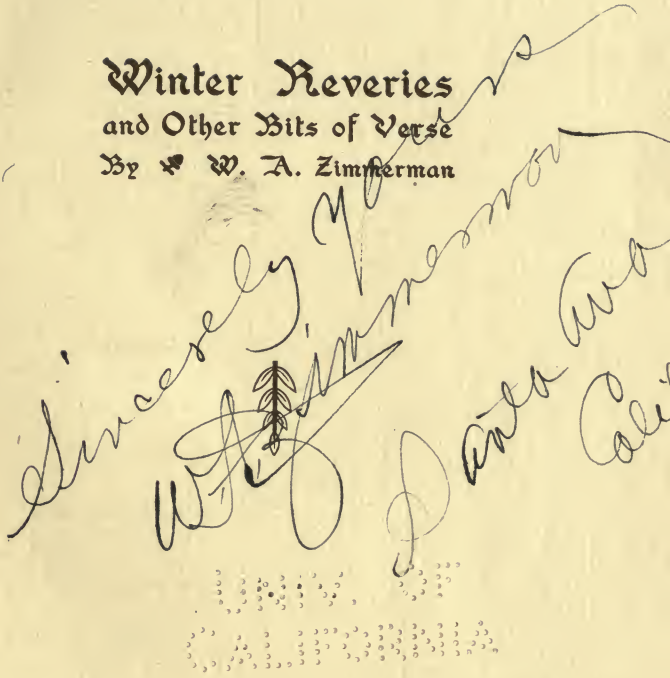

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Just a Foreword

HE writer of the few bits of verse contained herein does not, in presenting this collection to the cold, cold world, fear in the least for his literary or poetic reputation, for he has none; nor does he fear unfavorable criticism from the friends whom he favors (?) with a copy gratis, for they will be too well bred to criticise a well intentioned gift, even a hand made one by an amature. No one will be so foolish as to buy a copy—if perchance it be so, they would have already spent their money, so there would be no use to complain. If any one should borrow or steal a copy they would not dare to utter a sound for fear of being found out—hence the writer feels perfectly safe and is willing to take a chance. So with the sincere hope that some of the little thoughts herein expressed that have given him a little pleasure or amusement in their formulation, and any expression that may please or amuse you for a brief moment in this hustling, bustling, busy old world of ours, or bring back to the reader some of the fond memories on which we sometimes love to dwell in the pause in our mad flight.

If you should not care to have this among your other "Classics," please notify the author and postage will be cheerfully forwarded for its return trip home.

The writer has endeavored to slip in enough "Gems" with the Christmas spirit in them to make the reader a little more charitable than usual, and he does hereby and hereon most respectfully dedicate them all to those dear to him, who have furnished him with the little inspirations that have lead to their existence. So please, dear reader, accept them in the spirit in which the author intended that they should be; most of them are harmless. If any of them should please you a little bit, the author is human and might be tempted to give you others, if you will tell him so. THE AUTHOR.

At Christmas Time

T Christmas Time we give gifts to our loved ones and friends. It is an old custom and a good one. Somewhere buried in the breast of every one of us are feelings and emotions of kindness and love for others. It is well to express that at least once a year.

At Christmas time we look after the poor and needy and seek to make their lives happy. That is good, for it does us good to do good to others.

At Christmas time we gather in family reunions. Happy is that household where there is no vacant chair. Our children and our children's children come with laughter and hands laden with gifts. It is good to have it so.

At Christmas time we are brought in touch with the spirit which would prevail all the year if we really believed in Him in whose honor we celebrate Christmas. If the Christmas spirit could prevail all of the time poverty would be abolished, class strife would end, war would cease and hardest of all maybe, sectarian contention and bigotry would cease and the men who divide good people into factions and emphasize denominational and credal differences would be ranked with the Pharasees, whoever proclaim the "I am holier than thou" doctrine; and the supreme test of fellowship in the bonds of the gospel would be the love which sacrifices for the good of others, even such loves as Christ had.

(Selected.)

After the Holidays

(*Walt Mason in the Times*)

Am I the same good-natured jay who beamed so much on Christmas Day? Who said, with fervor in my cry: "The Christmas spirit should not die?" Am I the same old gun who smiled on every grown-up, every child, and radiated peace on earth, good will to men, and sterling worth? I have to wonder when I note that I'm as surly as a goat. I come home from the beastly grind with business cares upon my mind; I have a dark and brooding brow, and wear my grudge out on the frau. I growl and snort and fuss around because my slippers can't be found; I cuss because the dinner's late, because the dinners choke the grate, because the kids, with Christmas toys, are kicking up a beastly noise. And when I'm done with snorts and sneers I have the whole blamed bunch in tears. And when to roost I go at last, and study o'er the recent past, I wonder if I am the same old scout who played the Christmas game, with beaming smile and beck and nod, with softened heart and loosened wad. The fairies must have come along when I wound up my Christmas song, and then, to their and my disgrace, put some cheap faker in my place.

The Dear Old Moon

I.

The dear old moon is smiling, love,
As it has for many a year,
It watches o'er the dear old Earth,
O'er friends and memories dear,
She sails her course and falters not
On her path up in the sky
And brings fond memories back, dear
Memories sweet to you and I.
And as I gaze up to her face,
So full and round and true,
My thoughts go back into the past
To the time I first met you.

II.

How well do I remember dear!
It seems 'twere only yesterday
Our first sweet stroll together—
How she smiled and seemed to say:
"God bless you in your new found joy
And guide you on your way;
I'll be your friend by night time
As the Sun shall be by day."
She's kept her promise true, dear,
Ne'er failed her time to shine
Upon our happy trysting place,
To bless your life and mine.

III.

Our wedding bells rang clearer
As her silvery moonbeams fell
And caressed, with loving tenderness,
The form I loved so well;
I oft, have seen that picture,

And trust that long I may
For happiness is sweet indeed
Whene'er it comes that way:—
'Tis true the clouds o'ercast at times,
And hide her from our view,
But she undaunted still shines on
As we in life should do.

IV.

Again I see her silvery rays
—It's joy to me, and so I love her—
As they fall across the window-sill
On the new babe and its mother!
There may be sights in memories
That are precious, sweet to see,
But this is one that angels love
To show—at least they do to me.
And, too, this self-same gentle moon.
Helps us always to be brave,
As, thru Memory's tear-stained eyes, we see
That tiny new-made grave.

V.

Yes, dear, the moon is shining still
On joy, hope, love and sadness,
And I love her great round smiling face;
I hail her beams with gladness.
I love her first faint little ray
Which, like childhood, fast it grows,
Develops, and in due time
Perfected form and grace it shows.
Then one brief day, perfection reached,
Like life she fades, and naught can make her
Do aught, except as she should do,
Obedient be, unto her Maker.

VI.

Yes, I love my dear old moon,
Old friend in joy or sorrow;
In all my moods she meets with me,
Did yesterday, and will tomorrow.
Friends are so few that come and stay,
That never chide or scold us,
That, by their light in darkest hours
And, by smiling faces, hold us.
So join me, dear, and let us sing
A song of joy and praise together
For the dear old Moon that's been our friend
In every place and kind of weather.

VII.

I love my Moon, my dear old Moon,
I love her anywhere or place.
In any land or clime or sea
It's the same old happy smiling face.
The children dearly love her,
And the old folks love her, too;
And lovers always love her
As lovers true should do;
For she is kind and gentle
Her bright and cheery smile
Shines, and helps us realize
The Really, lifes worth while.

The Christmas Story

Quite a long time ago there lived a boy in a country more than a thousand miles East of the Great Rocky Mountains, where winter is REAL WINTER indeed, with lots of snow and ice and cold.

Bye and bye he grew to be a man and moved to a country where there was no real winter, but where the grass, and flowers and oranges grew out of doors all winter long. It was Christmas time and as he had been chosen superintendent of a Sunday School in that country of sunshine, he wanted to tell the little boys and girls, and some of the larger ones as well, something of the long winters and how he used to spend them, in order that they would better understand why Santa Claus always had his picture taken in furs and snow and with his sleigh; so he told a short story, and read them a few of his "Winter Reveries" i.e. rememberences of winter, in rhyme as follows:

You dear reader may, like the writer, have been reared in a country where winter was a stern reality, if so you can appreciate these lines more fully than one who has not actually experienced winter.

Winter Revelies

Winter! cold, icy winter is here!
The blast from the north, sharp, severe,
Tells in a voice of no gentle tone.
That a visitor is here from a polar zone.
He has stripped the foliage from plant and tree,
Banished the bird and stilled the bee.
Has covered the brook with a silvery sheen,
So its merry ripples can not be seen.

Has spread a white mantle over the grass,
Making red cheeks for school-boy and lass.
Bringing joy to some, while to others pain;
But, after the winter, spring comes again.

Winter! chill snow-clad winter is here!
To the hungry and cold it is, indeed, drear.
For, what can be the cold winter charm
To those who lack clothing to keep them warm?
To those who have neither shelter nor bed;
To those who suffer for fire and bread;
To those who have babes, to them, precious and sweet,
Crying from cold, or for something to eat.
What charm hath winter to poor folk like these,
As the wind drifts the snow, or howls through the trees?
Finds its way in through loose windows and door.
Winter! bleak winter, seems not for the poor.

The shouts of the sleighers, merry and clear,
Tell us, as they peal out on the frosty air,
That winter is here! And the sleigh bell's chime
To the clattering hoofs, keep cheerful time.
And the runners squeak, as away they go,
Bearing light hearts o'er the sparkling snow.
Winter hath charms for the well and strong;
With plenty to eat and wear, 'tis a song
The wind plays for them on Jack Frost's lyre,
As they ride in furs, or, by a cozy fire
Sit and muse while the coals glow red;
Or, they dream of summer in their downy bed.

As thus we sit musing o'er many such things,
Our thoughts ofttimes take up memories wings,
And soar away, 'way back into the past,—

Over the years that have flown so fast
To when, from the window, in great surprise,
We beheld the first snow, with our baby eyes.
We recall not the month, perhaps 'twas November.—
But 'twas the first fall of snow, that we can remember.
How we clapped our soft hands in childish glee!
And called to our Mamma to come and see;
And we hear her say: "Dear, don't you know
These falling stars are flakes of snow?"

The years roll on thus, and, one by one,
Each winter marks a year has gone;
But as they come and as they go,
We recall pleasant thoughts of each winter's snow.
Our warm yarn mitts, and boot-tops red;
Our flashy colored priceless sled;
Short rides, at first we had to take,
But soon we followed in the wake
Of older boys; and our courage grew
Until, down steep hills we almost flew;
With feet most froze, cheeks all aglow,
What fun we had with sled and snow!

Then, when evening shades would fall;
The cows and horses in their stall
Had all been fed; and, in the fold
The sheep were sheltered from the cold.
The noisy pigs, their sty within
Were keeping up their usual din;
The watch-dog now was at his post,
Fearing neither dark nor ghost;
In day time full of romp and play,
At night, the prowlers kept away;
The cold, he did not seem to mind;

And a faithful friend, in him we find.

Those evening meals our mothers spread;
For, growing children must be fed;
Then we'd gather 'round the grate
Our days' experience to relate
Of what we'd seen, or learned, or done,
Sometimes of work, oft times of fun;
And Grandpa, with his ready store
Of wonderous tales from days of yore,
Would entertain us by the hour,—
For Grandpa's tales had magic power
To amuse, instruct and charm a boy
And, fill a girlish heart with joy.

And grandma, too, in her easy chair
With her large bowed spec's, her snowy hair
Half hidden 'neath a dainty cap,
Would rouse up, from a nodding nap
To tell us stories, not a few,
Adentures,—all of which were true;
How those pretty farms were made
From praries wild, or forest shade;
How cities, mixed with bad and good,
Sprang up, where once a cabin stood;
And, how the railroad of the age
Had taken place of ox and stage.

Then, how her knitting needles flew!
As, round by round, that stocking grew;
Or else a warm and shapely mitt,
Perfect, in its form and fit,
Grew, stitch by stitch, as she nodded, dozed,—
And knit away with eyes half closed.
Then, by the fire-light's mellow glow,
Queer shadows with our hands, we'd throw

Upon the wall; or, carry tabby to the dark
And rub her back, to see it spark;
Or hold the skein of Grannie's yarns,
Or wind the ball, to rest our arms.

Now we'd romp in childish mirth,
Or, seated 'round the great stone hearth,
Tie large red apples to a string,
And watch them near the fire swing,
And turn, and fiz, and whirl, and sing
Until, when done, they'd tempt a king.
Chestnuts, baked in smoking embers,
Is another thing one long remembers.
Then, home-made cider, fresh and sweet,
Would help digest what we had eat.
Songs were sung, books were read,
Until 'twas time to go to bed.

Those winter mornings, sharp and cold,
The tracks all 'round, of Jack Frost, bold;
The snow in drifts, so soft and light,
Piled up high, small mountains white;
The horses, neighing in their stall;
The cattle, from their stanchion call,
The pigs now in their pens were squealing,
All for their morning meal appealing:
So, we bundled up, and out we'd go
To cut our way through drifts of snow.

And thus the days went flitting by
Until the yule time had drawn nigh;
The old church bell, in merry chime,
Heralds again, the Christmas time.
"Old Santa Claus," of our childish dreams,
His big high loads and reindeer teams;
His great fur coat to keep him warm,

So he'd not fear the winter storm;
His frosty beard, and hair so white,
Who always traveled in the night.

Then, as for dear old friendship's sake;
The New Year followed in his wake,
Dropping a stone on Time's Highway;
To mark the end of a year, we say;
And a page of life, so clean and white,
Was turned, for keeping the wrong or right.
The good resolves, we all did make,
And never, never, meant to break;
But, somehow, all except a few,
Were re-resolved, each year anew.

Thus, back on memories leaves we gaze,
Where time and fates, hath marked our ways;
Hath spurred us on to do our best,
Or held us back, from lack of zest:
Our days at school,—the good old master
Who thought we ought to learn much faster:
The spelling bee we would not miss
With sweetheart, and,—a stolen kiss—
Such rivalry, and great conquests,
Some, fun; some, greatest earnestness.

Courtship sweet, life's fond young dream;
Love, was our one absorbing theme:
And then at last, with cupid's aid,
We won our cause,—sweet, blushing maid.
With love, hope, and faith unshaken,
Our plighted troth, and vows were taken;
The vows that were to last through life,
The vows that made us man and wife;
With new ambitions, joy and pride,
Consecrated we, our own new fireside.

The wheel of life has gone once 'round,
Grandpa and Ma, sleep 'neath the ground;
New life is born to take the place
Of those who finish life's great race.
All things work out to God's own plan,
The child that was, is now the man;
And, at our knees, we see the face
That, in coming years, will take our place;
And, we may see, as we grow old,
Our dream of life, in life unfold.

An Ode to the Great American Desert

Yes, on and on; gaze east or west; look as you will,
For hours and days you see it still.
Those miles and miles of cheerless, barren waste
Remind us of some saddened human lives,
Who'e never had of happiness one single little taste.
Waiting, always waiting, until the time arrives
When God alone, or else inspired man,
Shall show the way by which this desert can
Be made to bloom and blossom as the rose.
How many years 'twill take, no mortal knows,
But just as sure as God's in Heaven above,
Just so sure, some day, in mercy and in tender love,
Will He teach how to grow the wheat and corn
To feed, and happy make, the millions yet unborn.
Oh, Desert drear! So sad, so comfortless and vast,
Man will thy many secrets learn and then, them use
at last.

Keep Agripping

When you're tired, worn and weary,
When the world seems cold and dreary,
If you then can sing your song,
You can help the world along.
If you smile, instead of frown,
When everything is up-side-down,
You are really, then, worth while.
For it takes a man to smile,
When the hand of fate is leading,
And, despite your prayers and pleading,
Drops the flag right in your face,
As you run in life's great race.

It takes a man to sing and smile,
Look up and keep a-trying, while
Everything seems set against him.
If you feel yourself a-slipping
Get a hold and just keep gripping—
Do not sigh and wonder why;
You can conquer, if you'll try
And be happy bye and bye,
In the thought that you have won
In the race that you have run;
There's the way to keep from slipping—
Get a hold and just keep gripping,
And keep up the smile and song.

It's an easy thing for any fellow,
When all the world is soft and mellow
To smile when things just come his way—
Health and good things all seem come to stay,
All the world looks bright and rosy,
When fortune snugs you up so cozy.
But it takes a man to push and trill,

When it's all the way up hill,
It's not the same: No, no, my dear;
It takes grit to push and steer
Through the dark, on to the goal;
If he will not admit defeat
Nor give up, because he's beat,
Nor spend his time in crying,
But hope on and keep a-trying;
If he smiles and does not holler,
You can bet your bottom dollar,
He'll keep trying till he'll win.

A "Back East" Memory

"All day the low hung clouds have dropped
Their garnered fullness down,"
All day we've watched the snow flakes fall,
Making a white phantom town,
Until at last in the dusky eve
From work, we nomeward turn
Where our loved ones wait for us,
To welcome our nome return.
And as the twilight deepens
And the lights begin to glow
We trudge along toward the ones
Who's hearts are not chilled by snow.

Soliliques of "Nin-nin Cat"

Written for the Santa Ana Daily Register by W. A. Zimmerman, in the hope that "these few lines" may cause some thoughtless people to think.

I wonder where those girls are at,
That used to say they loved their cat!
For weeks they've left me all alone,
As though their hearts were made of stone;
They never even telephone,
Nor send me just a little bone.
'Tis queer how quickly they forget
(Or seem to me, they do,) their pet;
And leave me here alone to cry,
And think of them, and wonder why.

'Tis true, their Papa still stops here,
And sometimes has a word of cheer
For me and "Snowball." (That's my chum);
But I wish those little girls would come,
For they're most as nice
As half grown mice.
There's no one that can take their place;
It's so far up to their Papa's face;
When he stoops down to get our cup,
It's as far away as when they stand up.

There's no one here to holler "Scat"
When e'er that big old neighbor cat
Comes over here and looks for me,
And makes me hide up in the tree.
If I could hear those girlies say—
"Scat, old Cat, you go away,"
That would be music sweet, to me,
And I'd be happy as could be.
I wonder if they'd scold, or laugh,
If I'd call them home by telegraph!

Sometimes their papa gives a look,
That seems to say, "Yes, you're forsook,"
And then stoops down and strokes my fur,
And I at once begin to purr.
That's the only way, you know,
I can appreciation show
For the many, many times he's fed
"Snowball" and me with milk and bread.
But food's not all—no, one depends
So much for happiness, upon one's friends.

So I'll mew, and mew, loud as I can,
And see if some good-natured man
Won't send them word, and let them know,
That I miss my little playmates so.
And have them write to me, and say—
"Yes, 'Nin-nin,' we'll come right away.
But I wonder what poor kitties do
That have no one to see them through,
While their little playmates go away
To enjoy a change and holiday!

So, little friends, who these "mewsings" read,
Please don't forget to provide the feed
For your little pets, while you're away,
Enjoying a happy holiday.
Yours truly, "Nin-nin Tat."
(Which interpreted means, Nigger Cat).

When You Have Grown Up I'll Miss You

Come, little girlie, and tell me,
What all have you done today?
How have you passed the hours,
While I've been on duty away?
Come, tell of your joys and your sorrows.
Do you miss me as I miss you?
Come, sit on my knee, and tell me,
Do you love me, and is your love true?
Come, whisper it to your dear daddy,
Your round little face close to mine,
And give me a kiss of affection—
Of love that shall last for all time.

CHORUS.

What will I do, little girlie
What will I do without you?
When you're grown up I'll miss you!
Then what will poor daddy do?
Sure, I will miss the sunshine
And the music of your sweet song.
When you have grown up and left me,
The years will be heavy and long.

It seems such a very short time—
But time, we all know, is on wing—
Since you came to brighten my life,
Such a tiny and helpless wee thing;
The clothes you first wore just fit dolly;
And you—let me see, is it true?—
You're growing and growing so fast,
I scarce can believe it is you.
So, come, then, and whisper it to me,

While I hold you here on my knee,
With your little, soft arms around me,
Tell me truly how much you love me.
CHORUS.

I know that your warm, little heart
Has for daddy, a place that will hold
Love for him, through the changes that come,
As he, like all else, shall grow old.
So I ask you to promise me, girlie,
That no matter how long it may be,
You always will love and remember
The daddy, who dearly loves thee;
And when you are the happy sweetheart,
Lucky fellow, who e'er he may be,
You'll remember your lonely, old daddy,
And the promise that you have made me.
CHORUS.

Congratulations

We've just received announcement,
That you are "man and wife."
Accept the wishes of your friends
For a long and happy life:
And, as you journey on your road,
May kind fortune to you deal
A very little of the woe;
But abundance of the weal.

There's a Nation Calling

There's a nation calling workers,
For men and women, too,
Who are tried and not found wanting,
Who are fully tried and true,
Who will not shirk a duty
But do with all their might
What in their light and wisdom
They believe to be the right.
There's a nation calling loudly,
Is calling lest we fall—
She calls the strong and willing:
Will you not heed the call?

There's a nation calling foemen
To fight in the cause of right,
And do it on the Christian plan
Of justice more than might;
That will help a fallen comrade,—
Tho one fall causes pain—
To rise and, with the proffered help,
Walk and live upright again.
There's a nation that is pleading—
Do you not hear tne call!
She is calling, calling, calling
For true men one and all.

'Tis your nation that is calling,
And the call is clear and plain.
She needs a great strong army,
And must not call in vain.
There's a record in the making
To be handed down the ages,
For the records we are writing
Will be carved on history's pages.
Let us make the old world better,
Shut out graft and vice and sin,
And by honor, truth and Christian life
Eternal praises win;
So that our people and our country,
Our nation and our race,
Can make and maintain a record,
That will win for us, first place.

Babies

(With apologies to Jerome K. Jerome)

Babies—I know nothing about them? Oh, yes I do!
I was one myself once, but I rapidly grew
Out of long clothes, I am happy to say:
Yet, I learned a little of the babies' way
Before I disposed of my long white dress,
Which, to me, was my greatest distress.
Whenever babies feel indisposed, or unwell,
The way that they cry, and kick, and yell,
Turn red in the face and worry Papa,
And, by holding their breath, frighten Mamma,—
Is a caution.

By the way, why do mothers persist in dressing
Babes in such long clothes? To keep you from guessing
Their true length? Are they of that ashamed,
Or, is it a cruel fashion custom has named?
I believe the first baby is yet to be seen,
Whose clothes aren't long enough for a lass of sixteen.
Perhaps that's all right; I'll not say 'tis not,
Or my meanness by mothers would ne'er forgot!
But the baby itself is what I'm to write about,
So I'll stick to my text and not branch out
Onto their clothes.

I find that most all new babies have eyes alike,
Of a liquid blue, and afraid of the light:
A smudge of a nose (speaking metaphoric),
And, most always, an odor of paregoric.
Then, the most careful observer never can tell,
By its clothes, whether it is "Johnnie" or "Nell."

They have a round little head, sparsely mantled with hair,
And two dimpled feet to kick at the air:
With hands they can't guide—though hard they try—
Nowhere, except to their mouth or their eye,
Or, perhaps, your new tie.

And then, every baby must have its full share
Of all the diseases to which babies are heir:
The colic, the phthisic, insomnia and croup:
They sneeze with a cold, and with whooping-cough whoop.
Scarlet fever, measles, chicken-pox and rash
At these bits of humanity, make a bold dash;
That is rough on the baby, and hard on your sleep.
They are a deal of trouble, and cost lots to keep,
Yet, without them, a home's not complete,
With their prattling tongues, and pattering feet,
And mischief-making hands.

But babies, with all their errors, and their crimes,
Their midnight wails in high-keyed chimes;
Their funny rule they always keep
To want to cry when you're asleep;
Or else their needful nap to take
When you're astir and wide awake:
Their queer ideas of what is fun,
They want you to, for the doctor run,
When the night is dark, and storm winds blow.
Though they never any mercy show,
They are useful little treasures.

Sure, they are not without their use;
To them, here is my flag of truce.
Surely not without their use, nay, their part
Is to soothe, and fill an empty heart.

Not without their use, when at their call,
Sunbeams of love break through the pall
That so often clouds the care-worn face,
Caused by defeats in life's great race;
No, not without their use, I guess,
When their tiny baby fingers press
Wrinkles into smiles.

Odd little people they! wise as the sage;
On this, our busy world's great stage,
Unconscious little comedians are they,
Supplying the humor, day after day,
In this all too heavy drama o- life,
And binding together husband and wife.
They are rich gifts from our Father above:
They strengthen the bands of family love;
Make house a home, as nothing else can,
These tender twigs of woman and man,
The parents' pride and joy.

Tney should strengthen parents love, we know,
Yet, I've sometimes thought, it seemed as though
The first dividing wedge, was the tiny hand,
That severed in twain love's mysterious band.
The purest of human affection is mother's love;
Of all things earthly it towers above.
'Tis the perfecting touch of a woman's life, and,
Something we coarse-fibered men, can scarce understand.
But, dear woman, do not in your desire to be a good mother,
Forget to be a good wife, remember, there is another
Your husband, to claim a part of your love.

Just For My Sweetheart

Who says there is no pleasure
In being a little sentimental?
To our soul and happiness,
It can not be detrimental.

When I behold the stars on high,
I do with rapture start;
For, though many miles divide us
And keep us far apart,
Our eyes may rest upon that
Same magnificent view above,
And our hearts thus be united by
Earthly ties of love.

Then give me sentiment enough
To sweeten up this life,
And offset the cares and worry
That with us is ever rife;
Trying hard to capsize us, but
Then, it is no use,
For, when we are bouyed up by love,
We seldom have the blues.
So, give me love and sentiment!
All that is my share,
For it revives, invigorates, like
The fresh pure mountain air.

"There's a Story, My Friend"

There's a story, my friend, that grows sweet in the telling,
A story well-founded and true.
It's a story so dear, many true hearts are swelling
With this story, for me and for you.

CHORUS.

The story, the story, the sweetest that ever was told,
The story, the story, the sweet story that never grows old;
It never grows old in the telling, whether told in a life or in song—
That Christ came and died to redeem us—so pass the glad tidings along.

With the Babe in the manger is this story's beginning,
So humble, so precious, so lowly,
Sent by God to this earth to redeem us from sinning;
His name has grown sacred and holy.

CHORUS.

To the Christ on the cross our eyes are now turning,
The cross, so cruel and bare;
Yet He bore it for us, for His heart, it was yearning
That we might in His glory share.

CHORUS.

Come and accept this Savior, and his pardon so free;
Then just pass the sweet story along.
It will help some poor brother as it has you and me.
Then sing the glad story in song.

CHORUS.

Autumn Winds

The chill autumn winds are now sighing;
The dead leaves are strewn o'er the lawn.
We can tell, the way foliage is dying,
That summer, bright summer is gone.

Yet autumn itself, is but fleeting,
And too quickly it passes away;
Then, winter with snow for its greeting,
Comes, inviting us all to be gay.

So do not waste time in fault-finding,
For the winter, and snow, will soon pass;
And spring, with bright sunshine is returning,
With the birds, the flowers and grass.

Spring, too, like the autumn and winter,
Must hasten, not loiter or play;
For nature has only just sent her,
To prepare for the summer a way.

Word Picture

(To My Sweetheart)

I wish I could draw you a picture!
A simple word picture, I mean.
I would draw you the fairest picture
That ever your eyes have seen:
One of earth's fairest flowers,
A woman, "God's master-piece!"
As pure as the spotless lily,
A gem in earth's mortal bower.

If I could I'd draw you a picture!
The one I so plainly see;
I am sure you would like the picture,
For, from flaw, it is wholly free:
In yon sick-room just draw the curtain
And behold what before you lies!
Convalescent,—each day growing stronger,
A beautiful picture! Yes? Certain.

Look now, with me on the picture!
See there, that pale, lovely face;
Soft blue eyes look out from the picture
And invite you nearer, apace!
A wealth of rich auburn tresses lies
Around that sweet face on the pillow
Forming a picture so fair,
You can never forget 'neath the skies.

See those lips now, in the picture.
They part with the sweetest smile,
And we see a blush come on the picture,
—Her lover has answered the smile—
Now on those half-parted lips waits a kiss for me,
I gladly stoop down and take it,
For, my sweetheart is the "convalescent,"
And I am the lover, you see?

Cupid's Revenge

To my bachelor friends who think themselves independent, self-controllable, love-proof beings,—this poem is respectfully dedicated. The reason for its existence is to depict to them the erroneousness of their much cherished and exalted ideas of being fully able to withstand the charm, sweet faces, and smiles of the Queens of Creation.

Time (and my own experiments and experience) clearly demonstrate the fact that they are being grossly deceived in cherishing such ideas, for, when Captain Cupid marshals his forces against you—even though they consist of no more than one weak woman, who would retreat from a mouse—you stand no more show than a pound of ice beneath the rays of a tropical July sun.

However, there is some consolation in such defeat, although surrendering, we may march off triumphantly with the prize—a "Captor made Captive."

THE AUTHOR.

I want to be a bachelor,
  And with the bachelors stand;
They are so interesting,
  And such a jolly band;
We rise up in the morning,
  Take our breakfast all alone;
No darling little children
  To help pick our "ham bone."

I want to be a bachelor,
  It seems to be such fun;
Nobody else's business
  Only just your own to run.
Oh, how his face is beaming,

Whene'er you chance to meet
This independent creature,
As he rides down the street.

I want to be a bachelor,
At least while I am young;
A well-fed, handsome creature,
And hear my praises sung
By all old maids, and maidens,
Who like my style, and gait,—
And wonder why, on marriage seas,
I ne'er launched my fate.

I want to be a bachelor,
So I can sleep all night;
The attractions seem so very small,
To get up and strike a light
To pour out paregoric
(And bad oaths) 'till you're blue;
Then to be told, the infant
So much resembles you.

I want to be a bachelor
The balance of my life;
And, if I never fall in love—
Of course, I'll have no wife.
Don't laugh at me, nor pity me,
My heart is made of stone;
So I feel that I'm quite capable
To face the world alone.

I want to be a bachelor—
Yes, that's what I am now;
One week ago tomorrow
I made my bachelor bow.
It seems so very novel

To think I've gone "Scott free,"
And, what is so much better,
I always am to be.

I want to be a bachelor,
And wear a high silk hat;
If you're a common married man,
You scarcely can do that.
Your shiny patent leathers
Would surely have to go;
But, instead of shining shoes,
Your shiny coat would show.

I want to be a bachelor;
Yes, that I do declare;
No angry wife to fly at me
And pull out all my hair.
Then, those dainty little feet
(Always cold as ice),
Snug up against your warm ones:
You bet your life that's nice.

I want to be a bachelor;
I should not like to "gee and naw;"
And fly around from morn till night
To please a mother-in-law.
To be a beast of burden,
Bring in the coal and water,
And make myself so useful
Just to save her daughter.

I want to be a bachelor,
So when I'm late at night,
I can come in and go to rest,
No wife's tears to fight.
And, . . I should fall up stairs

(Because there is no light),
I'll not be met in my own door
With, "Why, Man, I believe you're tight."

I want to be a bachelor
And sit upon my throne,
Monarch of myself and home,
To rule them both alone.
Oh, married life is very nice—
That is, if you are boss;
But too many times, I fear,
We find it "Hoss and Hoss."

I want to be a bachelor,
Not that I may live "fast,"
But to enjoy single blessedness
That, I am sure, will last.
But look—my eyes deceive me not!
See! crossing o'er the street.
No, that's no empty vision!
By Jove, but she is neat!

I want to be a bachelor,
But that vision makes me start.
I wonder what that feeling is
That flutters 'round my heart?
Hurry—don't lose sight of her!
Oh, dear, I feel so queer:
My brain's all in a whirl!
No, I've not been drinking beer.

I want to be a bachelor—
But, oh, that lovely face!
And such a form I never have seen—
A fawn has no such grace!
I am not mad—she smiled on me;

And, oh, such lovely eyes!
I feel as though I suddenly
Dropped into Paradise.

I want to be a bachelor—
But that bewitching face!
What's that you say?—No fooling, Tom,
What! that your sister Grace?
Oh, Tom, do me one favor, please,
If you never do another;
Introduce me to your sister—
I should like to be your brother.

* * * * *

I did want to be a bachelor,
But such whims and I must part;
For the gay and festive Cupid
Drove an arrow through my heart.
Tom kindly introduced me,
And my praises loud did sing:
I go there seven times a week,
And have bought a diamond ring.

I did want to be a bachelor,
A thing now of the past;
For, in love's subtle meshes,
I'm held secure and fast.
You make a very great mistake
If you think single life is bliss.
If you would have real pleasure,
Enjoy a sweetheart's kiss.

I did want to be a bachelor,
But now I've changed my mind,
And left such foolish notions
Far—yes, far behind.
Forgive me all the cruel things
I've said of married life;
For, in just one month from Sunday,
She, will become my wife.

Why I Love Her

Let me sing you a ditty,
Of my babe, "Sweet," so pretty;
She is just three years old,
And, so fair to behold,
You could not help but love
The sweet little dove;
And worship her, too,
The same as I do.

She's the sweetest of girls,
With golden brown curls;
And her eyes are as blue
As the violets so true.
The dear little Grace
Is in the right place;
For she makes our home bright,
From morn until night.

When I come home at night,
To our fireside, so bright,
Made so by Mamma and "Sweet;"
Then my dear little Miss,
Has for Papa a kiss,
And pussy must take a back seat.

Do you wonder I love
This sweet little dove,
With a face like the fairy's,
And her lips like red cherries?
She's the dearest of girls,
With her golden brown girls;
No pouting and fusses,
But all smiles and caresses.

At the close of the day,
When tired of play;
Her evening prayers said,
And all tucked up in bed;
Then, the angels I'm sure,
Will watch over her
All through the night,
Until morning light.

Must I tell you the rest?
Or have you quite guess'd
The reasons why I love her?
One is, she's the gift of
Our Father above,
And the other,
Well, she's just like her mother.

He had been going regularly,
  For several Sunday nights;
And, so he thought his Lady Love
  Was surely his, by rights:
And now he plead in passionate tones,
  The best he could command;
And for further inspiration,
  He gently pressed her hand.

"I love you, love you, darling one!
  Yes, better than my life.
I can not live without you!
  Will you be my wife?
O! tell me that you love me too,
  Answer with a kiss!
Then soon I'll make you Mistress,
  Instead of simply, Miss."

"Do answer quick, my angel, sweet,

Say you'll be my wife!
Save me from suicide, say yes,
And save my life."
But still the answer did not come,
No more than as if she slumbered!
He then began to realize,
Perhaps his days were numbered.

She looked at him with dreamy eyes
He scarce could understand;
But, somehow he understood enough
To make him drop her hand!
She then to him her answer gave,
(But they did not "touch noses")
"When you're dead, I'll send you, George,
A broken pillar of roses."

What is it? Only a blot of ink!
Caused by what? A blunder.
Yet it is enough, I think,
To make the writer say, OH, THUNDER!
That is, if the writer should be a man,
And the blot on a fine love letter;
But, if a lady,—of course, she can
Control her language better.

Spooks!

Night! Still and solemn night!
When nature has blown out her light;
And we are left to spooks' revenge,
'Tis then our flesh will creep and cringe
At sounds we hear, or seem to hear;
Sometimes afar, sometimes quite near,
Whether fancied, or real sincere,
'Tis sure to give a feeling queer
And make us wish, yes wish that we
Had some one, any one, for company.

Then come those cruel sounds, so weird,
We can not help feel "afeard";
And start at the sound of a donkey braying,
Or, from afar, some old hound baying,
As though it was old Satan praying
For our bones, and saying, . .
Come unto me, ye wicked sinner,
On the earth you've been a winner;
But I have got my eye on you,
And soon will have you in the stew.

We strain our ears to catch a sound
That seems to come up from the ground;
And, then, much to our surprise,
It seems to come down from the skies;
Then, do we hear it from behind,
And turn our eyes, only to find
That all is dark, or we are blind!
Then again, that sound came from behind,
Which makes us writhe as though in pain,
And we think we hear that sound again.

We hold our breath, and tremble so,—

We scarcely know which way to go,—
We think we'll die,—we surely will—
Then everything grows calm, and still;
If you ne'er have felt, you can not guess
How such awful stillness does oppress,
And make you think you will confess
All your sins, and them redress.
Then, again, you hear that prayer
Of Satan, on the midnight air.

We feel the cold chills down our back,
And seem, to so much courage lack
Because 'tis night, yea, awful night!
And nature's eyes are closed up tight.
We hear the moan of a gentle breeze,
As it plays among some stately trees,
It seems our very blood to freeze,
Except that part around our knees—
Which smite each other, as you hear
Or think you do, old Satan, near.

We pray for daylight to come quick,
Before we'er captured by 'Old Nick."
We now can almost feel the hold
Of his bony hand, clammy and cold.
Oh! how we wish we had a gun
That would shoot a ball, big as the sun;
We would blow old Satan up, for fun—
Or make him back to Hades run.
But hark! Our hair does stand on end,
As that sound again the air does rend.

And then we hear some awful groan
Which seems to come from Satan's throne.
We seem to hear a muffled tread,
Coming from the regions red.

We hear a plain though gentle tap,
Which sounds just like a spirit's rap.
We hear a sound like wings "aflap,"
You feel a hand upon your nap;
You sink right down in dire despair
As you think its the answer to his prayer.

Oh! What would you give, if only we
Were from this "spooky" feeling free,
And would not feel so queer at night,
When we're alone and nave no light!
And would not hear strange footsteps tread,
And direful thoughts pass through our head;
And recall all bad things we have said
Of those alive, and those that's dead;
And would not hear so very clear,
What sounds so much like Satan's prayer.

It Broke the Baby's Heart

Oh! how the baby sobbed and cried;
Oh! how he yelled and hollowed!
You'd thought his last friend had just died,
By the way he howled and bellowed.

The father came a rushing in,
And around the house he flew;
He had the nurse search for a pin,—
It must be that, he knew.

The mother sat quite motionless,
The trying ordeal through.
At last she said: "Why can't you guess,
He's just found out he looks like you."

The Bliss of a Kiss

O think of the bliss
That there is in a kiss;
If you're clever, and calm in its capture;
If you are only aware
You should take it with care,
It will fill your whole soul with rapture.

Oh! the joy and the bliss
That there is in a kiss;
Sweet and fervent,—you long can remember—
If received from your girl,
When out for "a whirl"
A nice moonlit night in September.

Some girls are quite slow,
To their kisses bestow
On all 'cept their father or mother,—
But do not feel blue,
For still there's a few
Who would rather kiss you than a brother.

Oh, the rapture! the bliss!
There is in a kiss,
If you can give it with finish and neatness;
'Tis delicious, (all grant it)
If you but dare plant it
On her lips, the center of sweetness.

But don't be a fool,
And try to follow a rule;
Some old set rule, until you are gray:
If success you'd achieve,
And full bliss you'd receive,
Just do it the girl's favorite way.

There are sweet little kisses
For babies—for misses—
And your sweetheart, you sometimes 'most smother;
They are nice, (I'll be fair),
But none can compare
With the kiss of the wife or the mother.

A Toast

A toast to the B. C. I. S. S. girls of the Presbyterian Sunday School, Santa Ana, California, April first, nineteen hundred fourteen, by their teacher W. A. Z., at a dinner given by the losers in a class contest.

A race fairly lost might be worse;
It might be dishonestly won,
So cheer up, losers.

Here's to the B. C. I. S. S. Girls,
To their health and to their work,
To the career, of the lassies dear,
And duty they will not shirk;
May their lives be blessed with all that's best,
And may they all ring true.
May they help one another and stand by each other,
Each do what they find to do.
May they find life's load as they tread life's road
Not too heavy for them to bear.
May there be no dark night, may their days be bright
And the weather be mostly fair.
Then raise with me the sparkling glass
Filled with water, pure and clear,
Which is an emblem of the lives they live,
Filled with Christ and His good cheer.

How Do You Treat Your Mother?

Girls, how many of you kiss your mother good night and good morning? A loving kiss is a wonderful antidote for a carefurrowed brow and a tired heart.

All through your life, in joy and in sorrow, that loving mother kiss has never failed you, and now it is your turn.

Your mother is the best friend you ever had or ever will have. All the world, father, brother, sister, husband, child, friends, may desert you, but shining steadfast and true, through good report and ill, will be the beautiful mother love that has been yours ever since you were first placed in her arms—a tiny pink-faced baby.

What are you giving in return for all these years of self-sacrifice and devotion?

Are you lifting the burdens from her weary stooped shoulders and placing your strong youth at her service? Are you giving her a treat sometimes by taking her to some place of amusement or bringing her some pretty little adornment that she would never think of buying for herself? Remember that she is still a woman, even if she is old and wrinkled, and that she will love pretty things till she dies.

Tell her your secrets and jokes. She will keep the former and enjoy the latter. Make her sit down while you do the work that she has always done.

You owe all this to her; it is a debt of honor that will take all the years she is spared you for you to repay.

Some day those loving, patient eyes will close forever, and the dear, toil-hardened hands will be quietly folded and then with a passion of regret you will realize that you never did half enough for her.

Do it now and save yourself this suffering.—Selected.

Contrast

A GOOD woman, is the lovliest flower
That blooms 'neath the heaven above!
She cheers up man, in his darkest hour,
And sweetens his life with her precious love:
She urges him on to his greatest power;
For, what will man not do for woman's love?
Whether she live in house, castle or cot,
Her sweet, pure influence is never forgot.

But when a woman to frivolity is given,
And by its current, so sweeping and strong,
From the port of pure love and virtue is driven,
And in broad sinful seas she flounders along,
With her allegiance to God widely assunder riven,—
Is hse then not a powerful stimulus to wrong,
Dragging men down into the lowest depths,
Fulfilling, to a letter, "His Satanic" precepts?

Young women! YOU are the architects! Build, then,
as you will,
Your character in the mire, or on purities hill;
Draft well your plans,—each part to fit,—
And make this world better for having lived in it.
For the women do, we scarce need be told,
The key to Life's greatest problems hold;
Then, whether your station be lowly or high,
To fill it with honor, you ever should try.

Why I Am Single

After a careful perusal
Of your gentle refusal,
I hasten to metion
It is not my intention
To give you a second chance
To hurl such a lance
At my honest heart;
Therefore, we must part—
Forever!

You are, perhaps (?) quite sincere,
But your actions so queer;
I'm sure you don't love
Me all others above.
The truth it must be,
(Or it looks so to me)
It's a fact, my young elf,
You're in love with yourself—
Forever!

But, after long years of loving,
Of "honeying" and "doving,"
We will not spoil the moral
And end in a quarrel,
But simply say "quits,"
As I don't like "misfits;"
For your life and mine,
I see will not rhyme—
Forever!

I'm a poor man, you see,
With a heart all for thee;
But it makes some hearts cold
To compare love with gold;

And its bright yellow hue
Has great attractions for you:
So, without malice or strife,
I don't want such a wife—
Forever!

So a bachelor I'll be,
With some sad thoughts
Not whining nor repining,
But in my large chair reclining;
No children to cry,
No beefsteak to buy;
Simply live easy and enjoy life:
For I'll have no wife—
Forever!

You are free now, behold!
So go marry for gold;
It may happiness give
As long as you live;
For some die young, I am told,
Who marry for gold.
You've no risk to take—
Only your happiness at stake—
Forever!

Such a courtship was ours—
Naught but pleasure and flowers!
From the other, not one harsh word
Have our ears ever heard;
Only love and caresses,
And lots of sweet kisses.
All—all, now is past:
Such sweet love could not last—
Forever!

Still, life is worth living,
If for naught but forgiving.
So, contented I'll be,
With no malice for thee;
But live on—not blind,—
And some day MAY find
A sweet little wife,
To be the joy of my life—
Forever!

One who will love me for what I am worth,
And think me the dearest of men upon earth.
To just such a wife
I could devote my whole life—
'Though of my poor heart
You have a large part.
But I'll have to forget
You, and be happy yet—
Forever!

So good-bye, my old love
'Till I meet you above.
May your life here on earth
Be full of joy and mirth;
And I hope that you can
Find your ideal (moneyed) man.
But, if ever in need of a true friend you be,
Be not afraid to call upon me—
Forever!

Good News

I've just received a telegram!
  Can you guess the news?
It's from my wife,—to read it
  Drives away the blues;
She's coming home tomorrow.
  And I tell you I am glad;
She's been away two months,
And what a lonesome time I've had.

She's been to spend the summer
  With friends in Eastern States;
And I've looked at the calendar
  'Till I've worn off all the dates.
The days seemed to be standing still,
  Each one seemed a year.
Life is not worth living,
  Without my wifie dear.

I'll not attempt to tell you
  All the trouble I have had;
Between keeping house and boarding,
  It's enough to drive one mad.
You don't care to visit friends
  Who are enjoying life;
For each such visit only serves
  To remind me of my wife.

The club seems hollow mockery,
  I guess it's lost its power;
There is nothing there to please
  Or amuse you for an hour.
But she's coming home tomorrow!
  Oh, how happy I shall be
When the time of meeting has

Arrived, and she's at home with me!

As I read that message o'er and o'er,
I can whistle, dance and sing;
And I feel almost as good as when
I bought our wedding ring.
Talk about your having fun
When your wife's away!
I'd rather have her home a year
Than be alone a day.

The Little Thief, Dan Cupid

There is a little highwayman,
And still he plays his game;
A bold and daring thief they say,
Dan Cupid is his name.

Some how, in the dear dead past,
That fast retreating day
The little robber came to me,
And stole my heart away.

I care not now, nor worry,
O'er such a loss as this;
For the little thief, in doing so,
Brought me a gift of bliss.

For in his mad-cap plunder,
In some mysterious way,
He left it with a sweetheart true,
Who holds it, to this day.

Blue Eyes, Cease Your Peeping

There's a girlie that's true,
And Her eyes are as blue
As the azure that's up in the sky.
She is happy and gay,
And she's always that way,
When you see her you'll never ask why.
She is Nature's own fairy,
And her glances, they carry
Just like a Cupid's love dart,
When she aims at a fellow,
She can make him quite mellow,
For she shoots straight through the heart.

CHORUS.

So, please, dear girl,
Let your blue eyes go sleeping,
And rest from their peeping,
Let them close, and stop teasing me.
Let them sleep in their nest,
And forget all the rest,
And just dream, sweetheart, of me.

Now, this dear little sweetheart,
She can draw you by such art,
You scarcely feel you are slipping,
If a kiss you could steal
You'd be happy, and feel
Love's nectar cup truly you're sipping.
I would take a long chance
For a word or a glance,
And be willing to call it my fate,
If she could only just guess,
And would answer me, "Yes,"
I want her to be my own mate.

CHORUS.

She has such a sweet smile,
That it's really worth while,
Her favors to merit and seek,
Her teeth's pearly rows
She so artıully shows,
And a dimple on either soft cheek.
So, dear sweetheart, don't scold,
If I've grown very bold,
If I offer myself and my heart,
For your wireless call
Has got me, that's all,
And Cupid has loosened his dart.

CHORUS.

So, please, dear girl,
Let your blue eyes keep peeping,
For my heart has ceased sleeping.
It's throbbing, my dearest, for thee.
I love you the best,
So forget all the rest,
And just dream, sweetheart, of me.

Choose Your Beacon Light

As you're sailing o'er life's ocean
Are the billows tossing high?
Is the light of Heaven dimming,
Have the clouds o'ercast your sky?
Are you erring, are you fearing
That your boat will meet with loss?
Take advice from the Great Mariner,
Steer directly to the Cross!

CHORUS

Fear not the storms, nor angry billows foaming.
Steer to the Cross and cease your chartless roaming.
You need no other compass, you cannot suffer loss,
If you will heed the warning, and be guided by the Cross.

You can waste your time and chances
Of reaching port that's safe to land:
If you pick the erring beacon light,
You'll be beached upon the sand.
There'll be sorrow on the morrow,
For you then will know your loss—
Heed the warning of your Saviour
Let your beacon be the Cross!

CHORUS

It's the light that leads to glory,
It will bring you safely home,
Matters not what tongue you speak
Nor what land or sea you roam.
Keep on trying, colors flying,
And you then will surely gain
Entrance to that harbor safe,
Where the Prince of Peace doth reign.

CHORUS

The harbor calm is waiting us,
We have but to enter in
And anchor in its waters,
Free from vice and stain of sin.
You should take it nor forsake it—
This precious Cross—before you've passed
The entrance to that harbor.
That takes you safely home at last.

CHORUS

The Battle Call

There's a foe; Oh, Christian soldiers,
That should make us rise and think
It's the serpent of intemperance
It's the awful curse of drink.

Arouse, ye Christian soldiers,
With all your might and main,
Fight on, Oh, Christian soldiers,
May you not fight in vain.

This awful foe, that brings but woe,
Must vanish from our sight,
Fight on, Oh, Christian soldiers,
Fight on with all your might.

Fight on and do your duty—
Let your valor never wane,
Fight on, Oh, Christian soldiers,
Till this monster you have slain.

Felicitation

(To Clarence and Velda June 28, 1912)

Congratulations—yes, my friends, an hundredfold;
And good wishes, all our hearts can hold.
So take your marriage vows in sweet affection;
  Just remember that it does not pay
  To spend one's life in finding fault,
Or searching for the other's imperfection.
We're only human; so if happy live,
Have patience plenty, love and forgive.
  The reward is yours for reaping.

If after many years of married life,
You are smiling still, as man and wife,
And in each other's company and love,
  You would rather spend your time
  Than with any other person
Under the stars above;
It's a pretty good, safe guess,
That you'll be happy, yes—
  Even though you're married.

The Autumn Rain Drops

(In California)

The autumn rain has come a dropping
And 'twill start the grass agrowing
In the valleys, on the plains and hills,
Yes, all Nature seems to smile
And says "Wait a little while
See the tender germination,
And the splendid transformation
Just watch the new life budding,
And putting on the frills.

The great live oaks seem greener
All the woodland shrubs are cleaner
In the valleys, on the plains and hills.
The mistletoe so soft and clinging,
In her rich green, gently swinging
From branches of the rugged sycamore.
And then another thing we all adore
Is the bright red holly berries
Which our hearts with joy of Christmas fills

When harvest's in, and it don't matter,
Then I love to hear the rain drops patter
As I lie in bed and think
How glad nature is to drink
At this fountain, aye forsooth,
Fountain of renewing youth,
And we know this is the why,
A rich harvest bye and bye,
Will pay those who plow and sow
For we all of California know
What it means to hear
The Autumn rain drops fall.

Ephriam's Possum Supper

Old Ephriam Snow was a good old man,
A pious old man, if you please.
He lived down South after slavery days,
By the sweet magnolia trees.
He lived all alone in his little hut,
Where the balmy South winds blow,
For his wife and children had been sold
Into slavery long ago.
He worked all day, and he prayed each night;
His prayers were long, 'tis true,
And you had to sit and sit and sit
While he asked the blessin' through,
For his faith was deep that the Lord would keep
Under His protecting wing
All good folks, whether white or black,
If they'd only pray and sing.

The autumn winds were sighing now,
The leaves began to fall,
The Indian summer days were passed,
And old Ephriam felt the call
Of the inner man, for that morsel sweet
To the colored man that time of year,
Some juicy possum meat.
He knew the possum now was fit
To make a dainty dish,
Just baked with sweet taters
And such, was sure a tempting wish.
But to get that precious possum
Was sure a task not light;
'Twould take old Ephriam and his hound
To the woods at night.
So after his day's work was done
At the close of day,

He and the old, faithful hound
Started for their cherished prey.

The stars in heaven were twinkling,
The old moon brightly shone,
When Ephriam and his old hound dog
Started out alone;
But after hours of tramping
And watching here and there,
Look as they might, they could not find
A possum anywhere.
So, as the hour was growing late,
And no possum tracks in sight,
They started home, resolved to try
Again tomorrow night;
So fatigued and disappointed some,
They reached the cabin door,
With mind made up, tomorrow night
To try their luck some more.

The next night, fortune smiled on him
As you'd expect to see,
For Towser smelled a possum
Up an old gum tree.
Joy knew no bounds; his ivories gleamed,
And Towser loud did bay,
And Ephriam, he gave thanks to Him
(Without much time to pray)
For the possum was away inside
Of that old hollow gum,
And how to get him out of it
Might worry white folks some,
But not so this old colored man;
He had been there before,
He knew just how to fix it
To get that possum sure.

He cut a brush a few feet long.
And deftly split the end,
And then he pushed it in the log,
And quickly did he send
It up to meet the possum,
And did twist it in his wool,
And when he got a good strong hold,
He just began to pull,
And out came Mr. Possum,
And quick as can be said,
A fat, young, juicy possum
At Ephriam's feet lay dead.
That he was a happy colored man
You can have no fear,
And the story of his going home
Need not be related here.

The possum he was drawn and hung
Up by the legs so fine,
Until the next night, when Eph
Could have the time,
Which, by the way, was Hallowe'en,
And this would come just right
To help old Eph enjoy himself
On this peculiar feelin' night.
He didn't want no company much,
Just thought that he alone
Could eat all that possum meat
Off of every single bone.
And then he thought of Towser;
He would sure play fair;
The bones, and what he'd chance to leave
Would be old Towser's share.

All day he whistled and he sang
And seemed in spirits light,

For well he pictured in his mind
The feast in store for night.
So early in the evening,
The fire was in the grate,
And the possum was a-baking
Before 'twas very late.
The sweet taters and the other things
That in his mind had run,
Were timed so to be ready
'Bout the time the possum's done.

At last, 'twas all in readiness
And put upon the table,
And Eph sat down to enjoy it
As much as he was able.
For he was somewhat tired,
And sorry, a little bit at least
That he had asked nobody
To help enjoy his feast.
So he would ask his Master
To forgive his selfish sin,
For neglecting as he had done
To invite a neighbor in.
Besides, the dear Lord knew full well
The possum was quite small,
And he alone (with Towser's help),
Would surely need it all.

He placed his elbow on the board,
And then he rests his chin
Upon one hand, with the other one
He shades his eyes,
And then he just began
To say his grace, which was
A bit longer than he knew.
He closed his eyes quite reverently

And forgot that he was through,
And as he ended up with
"I pray Thee, Lord, to keep—to keep,
He in that restful attitude
Just dozed off to sleep.

As he dozed and rested there,
As queer as it may seem,
His mind went off to the happy land
In a most delightful dream.
He saw old Peter at the gate,
As happy as could be;
He saw old Liza and the piccanins
All singing there and free;
He saw the happy angel band
Playing music sweet;
He saw the great white throne
And the golden street.

He saw the great white judgment throne
And all its beauteous realm;
He saw the pearly ship of faith,
With the Master at the helm;
And as he looked around amazed,
He saw a great arm-chair,
And o'er one post hung a starry crown,
And his own name written there;
And joy! Oh joy! To his surprise,
Right in this vision fair
Were possums, possums, great and small
Possums everywhere.

Yes, there were possums great and small,
And some were gray and old;
Some were sleek and rounded out
Much as their hides would hold;

But all seemed happy and content,
And seemed to have no fear—
Just walked around and winked at him
Whenever he came near.
They seemed to be as much at home
As any angel there,
And one old rascal just got up
And sat down in his chair.

Now, while Ephriam slept and dreamed,
As here in just set out,
There was something human and quite real
A-happening thereabout.
For darkies, just like white folks,
Get mighty curious, too,
On Hallowe'en, and snoop around
To see what they can do,
To play a joke, or cut a prank
Or steal (in fun), or raise the deuce
Or carry off, or cnange around
Anything that they find loose.

Two young "coons" out nosin' around
On this particular night,
To see what they could find or do,
Were attracted by Eph's light,
So just sneaked up and looked around.
They almost died at the surprise
As they beheld the tempting sight
That therein met their eyes.
For right before them was possum,
Just sufferin' for the eatin,'
And Eph sat there, as big as life,
Apparently a-sleepin.'

They made a little tiny noise,

Just to test his hearer,
And when he didn't move nor stir,
They came a little nearer.
They raised the latch, and swung the door
Until it opened wide,
And then they bold and bolder grew,
And ventured on inside.
And still old Ephriam slumbered on,
And smiled, as in his dreaming
He saw the New Jerusalem,
With its many possums teeming.

Still nearer came the colored pair,
Who now began to feel
It would be no sin at all
To that possum supper steal.
So they gathered up the possum
And all the trimmings, too,
And retired to the outside,
As most any one would do.
And there they tore that possum
Complete from limb to limb,
So, about as quick, as I tell you,
There was nothin' left of him.

Still, old Ephriam did not wake,
But his feast was gone for good,
And the feasters thought to play more joke
And fool Ephriam if they could.
So they slipped the platter with the bones,
Right back into its place,
And with some grease and gravy
They thought to smear Eph's face.
So gently did they work around
His chin, his cheeks, his lips;

They smeared his shirt-front and his hands,
And then his finger-tips.

Now the rogues were satisfied
Their joke was played quite through,
So they put on the final touch,
And quietly withdrew.
And Ephriam woke, and his surprise
Could not well be told,
For he could not believe his sight
For what he did behold.
He rubbed his eyes and stirred again,
And 'lowed he never owns
How that possum ran away
And left that pile of bones.

The evidence was everywhere,
His hands, his lips, his face;
Circumstantial evidence was sure
All around the place.
Yet he somehow, could not understand,
And his mind was not quite clear.
He could not believe his eyes or mouth;
Yet everything was there.
The situation would not clear;
In fact, it just plum beat him.
At last, he gave it up, and said,
"I surely must have eat him."

So he ambled up and cleared the place,
Amid evil thoughts and grievin's,
And picked what little meat there was,
And gave old Tows the leavin's.
At last, he thought somehow,
Which kind o' soothed his cares,
Mayhap he had entertained the angels
There somehow unawares.
And it is a legend to this day
In that country there
How Eph Snow had entertained
The angels unaware.

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